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II

The Slavonic soil cultivators, depending upon economic self-sufficiency and cooperative effort in marshy and forest regions, as well as in the steppes, practiced a system of joint-family ownership of land (zadruga system). But when nomadic warriors imposed their rule over the tillers of the soil, the invaders considered the land over which they ruled to be their property and forced the peasants who were settled on it to pay them tribute in grain and other agricultural produce. According to the expanded version of the *Pravda Ruskaya*, for instance, after the death of a *smerd* (peasant) his sons would inherit the land, but if there were no sons the property went to the prince.

It is possible that already at that time some of the Asiatic conquerors occasionally divided and redistributed the land among the peasants according to the changing size of their families, the ability to till it and pay taxes and tithes. This might have been the most expedient way by which the conquerors sought to increase the income from the lands which they controlled. At the same time the peasants that formed a land commune were held jointly responsible by their over-lords for a predetermined amount of tributes, as well as for criminal acts committed on their territory.

The system of joint community responsibility was a well-known practice in the society of steppe nomads. It was especially applied as a means to procure fines and force the payment of debts. In that social system if a wrong-doer was unable to pay a fine, his nearest relatives, and failing them, the whole camp, had to provide it.[10] Therefore when these predatory herdsmen imposed their rule over the farming folk, they might have introduced the principle of joint responsibility as the most expedient way to collect the tributes and to exploit economically the subjected peoples.

It was by such social processes that the non-warlike and stateless society of the Old-Slavonic agricultural folk was incorporated into a military society of power-oriented horsemen of the Eurasian steppes.

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territories. He was adorned with the title of the "Metropolitan of Kiev and of all Russias,"[4] a symbolic beginning of Russian religious and political unity.

When the Tartars in the beginning of the thirteenth century imposed their overlordship over all Russian lands, lacking an efficient administration and interested not so much in governing as in tributes, they restored to the native princes their old titles and gave them the right to collect tributes for them. In this manner in the beginning of the fourteenth century Ivan Kalita of Moscow succeeded in obtaining a *yarlyk* (charter of privileges) in which the Tartar Kahn recognized Ivan as the *Veliky Knyaz* (Grand Prince). A few years later Ivan also became the chief collector of tributes for the Kahn in Russian lands.

In his function as chief farmer of internal revenues Ivan practiced extortion from his Russian subjects and acquired a great personal wealth. His riches enabled him to purchase entire domains and apanages, and to buy the protection and backing of the Kahn. Seeing the ascendency of Ivan, and following Byzantine traditions of Church and state unity, the Metropolitan of Kiev and of all Russias moved his residence to Moscow and built a cathedral there, ready to support Moscow princes in their political ambitions.

The expansion of Moscow's power over other Russian lands was favored also by external circumstances and pressures. By the second part of the fourteenth century the central authority of the Tartar Empire, the Golden Horde, had weakened and as was customary in Turco-Mongol society, civil wars ensued among the contenders for the throne. This situation presented an opportunity for power wise princes of Moscow to change their policy of cringing and prostration before the Tartars into that of rebellion and bargain. From now on at times they fought the Tartars, at other times they were again kneeling before them; but they now knew how to take advantage of Tartar weaknesses and how to gain new possessions with Tartar assistance. In this policy of expansion at the expense of other Russian principalities the Muscovites had the support not only of the Khans but that of the Eastern Orthodox clergy as well. Their

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6
WESTERN TECHNOLOGY AND RUSSIA'S BUREAUCRATIC AUTOCRACY

I

THE STRUCTURE of Muscovite power had some advantages in comparison with the Turco-Mongol system of rule. The steppe warriors had not developed an efficient system of administration. They depended upon their vassals for the collection of taxes. This practice gave an opportunity to the vassals to enrich themselves, which strengthened their feelings of independence and of revolt. In the same manner the principle of religious tolerance and the practice of granting Church autonomies helped to perpetuate religious, linguistic and cultural differences among the subjects, a situation that did not favor ideological unification and centralization of power. In Russia, on the other hand, a system of centralized administration which followed the Byzantine pattern took care of revenues and of military manpower. The enserfed agricultural population was a source of steady income. Furthermore, state dominated Church tended to Slavicize linguistically and to unify ideologically all subjects under the Czar.

However, this system of Muscovite military theocracy that was efficient in dealings with the Mongols, proved inadequate in Russia's relations with its adversaries in the West. Since the end of the middle ages Western countries went through a series of ideological and economic changes which had fundamentally affected the structure of the Western world. Humanism and Renaissance, Reformation and Counter-reformation, the industrial and political revolutions had brought about considerable intellectual and technological advance and radical structural changes. Compared to the West, Russia had many drawbacks in her economic system. Its power-centered and militarized social struc-

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ture was detrimental to the development of trade and industry. For centuries its economy remained founded on a system of primitive agriculture. Lack of large centers of trade and industry adversely affected rural economy. There was no stimulation for agricultural improvements and for freeing of the serfs. Instead, the emphasis was on the exploitation of serf labor as the most expedient means to satisfy the demands of the landlords and of the state. The landlords were mostly absent on military campaigns or other state duties and were generally disinterested in land improvements. At the same time the system of using the land as a pay for military or other state services, in a country whose war campaigns and military contingents were increasing, tended to diminish the size of the donations and increase the burdens imposed on the serfs.

The lack of urbanization, together with the low standard of education of the service nobility, kept also the intellectual development of Russia far behind that in the West. Intellectual activity was limited mainly to the court circles. The ideology and practices of the Russian Church favored intellectual stagnation. Russia accepted Christianity from Byzantium after the Greek Church had already given up classical traditions of Hellenism. By the time Byzantine Christianity entered Russia, Byzantine literature had assumed an almost exclusively ecclesiastical character, and education consisted almost entirely of religious teaching and the reading of the lives of the saints. Art, too, became exclusively religious and stereotyped. All thought was regimented according to religious dogmas and political objectives of the power-holders.

In Russia this type of intellectual rigidity and inactivity was emphasized because of the use of the Old-Slavonic language in the Church, which resulted in neglect of Greek language. And it was considered a sin to learn the "thrice accursed Latin tongue." Thus, the Russian clergymen became isolated from the West because they lacked the possession of the only instruments in which human knowledge was communicated in those days. Moreover, Russian Orthodoxy, like the Byzantine Orthodoxy, was based on monasticism. But unlike the manifold monastic practices of the Western Church, the monks in the Russian Church tended to lead an inactive life of asceticism aimed at personal salvation.

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596 women and children of the household. The power of the bolshak was lifelong, but in case of mismanagement, prolonged illness or want of mental powers, the family adult male members or the village elders could remove him and place another adult male as the head man of the household.[2] All the property: land, farm implements, cattle, buildings, household furniture, and utensils were considered common property of all household members, particularly male adults. But women's clothing and other personal belongings, such as linen and canvas, brought as a dowry or produced by women were considered their private property. When such a household was broken up the common property was divided equally among all the adult male members, regardless of the degree of blood relationship.

The bolshak was assisted in his management by a family council (*soviet*) consisting of married male members, while the bolshuka was assisted by the married females. Though the bolshak's place after his death was taken by his eldest son or his eldest brother, it happened occasionally also that such a household came to be ruled by a woman, if she proved to be an exceptionally resolute personality and good manager.

596 178 476 The remnants of such a family collective persisted in some rural parts of Russia until the beginning of the twentieth century. Such a household in which some of the Old-Slavonic traditions were still in existence was looked upon as a labor association, as much as an association of blood-related families. This is why the heads of such a family commune were designated, not by parental names, as father or mother of the family, but by functional names, as managers of the common property.[3]

596 651 621 Originally the powers of the household soviet were an important check on the authority of the head elder. The soviet assured protection against inequity and tended to maintain equalitarian relationships among the married members of the household. However, early in the development of the Great-Russian society the events tended to favor the power of the bolshak. Following the practices of Mongol rule, frequent censuses were held and frequent levies were imposed on the population according to the number of households or according to acreage. The village community which composed a cess district was made jointly respon-

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sible for the whole amount of the tributes and taxes assessed. It was, therefore, in the interest of this land tax commune to favor concentration of power in the hands of the household head and to support his strictness in rule so that each household might contribute at the end of the fiscal year its share of the common tax assessment. With the lack of such a system of control, the taxes of the defaulters might fall on other members of the village community.

To meet the obligations to the tax commune it was necessary for each household to have sufficient manpower and all the farm equipment it needed. Household partition, which implied dispersal of manpower, need for new equipment, and increased taxation, was therefore frowned upon. Loitering or prolonged absence from the community also had to be discouraged. Early marriages, joint households, and rigid supervision by the elders were fostered. In addition, internal household conflicts provoked by forced regimentation and intensified because of lack of privacy, crowded quarters, insufficient food and clothing increased the need for autocratic rule:

> All in the household well know and have learned by experience that in the interest of the well-being of the household it is absolutely necessary that all obey one elder, who has knowledge and experience about the household and upon whom would depend all matters of husbandry.[4]

The landed nobility and the land-owning Church also supported the absolute power of the bolshak and disapproved of household partitions on their estates. The estate owners were bound to furnish the timber and other materials for the construction of new izbas in case of the division of an old household. They also had to provide the new households with farm equipment, all of which was a burden because it implied additional expense for the landlords. At the same time the government, which was constantly engaged in warfare and was increasingly in need of new recruits, found it more expedient to get these from large households so that the tilling of the soil would not suffer and the tax-paying powers would not decrease while military campaigns were taking place. Therefore, all the authori-

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secret police had completely free hands in hunting down the members of the Terrorist movement, using the same cunning means as the terrorists did. Each party relied on terror, based on the principle that all means were justified. One of the principal victims in this struggle was Czar Alexander II whose ideas and policies were aimed at liberalizing the Russian society and raising it to the economic and educational level that had been achieved in the European West.

As a reaction against this event, Alexander's son and successor, Alexander III, instituted officially a regime of terror and declared a ruthless war of extermination of all terrorists and other subversive elements. The Russian public opinion, too, shocked by the assassination of Alexander II, was becoming alert to the dangers of terrorist practices.[29] Such circumstances had a disheartening effect on terrorist plans. A number of revolutionaries found it expedient to move the center of their activities to European capitals. Other young malcontents endeavored to "go among the people" (*iti v narod*) and start mass agitation and propaganda. These *Narodniki* wanted also to raise the educational and economic standards of the lower strata of the Russian society, particularly the peasants who were to play a significant role in the coming events.

16
THE STRUCTURE OF VILLAGE COMMUNITY

I

BEFORE serfdom, the land commune (*mir*) whose function was to distribute land periodically, to collect taxes and maintain order, was also an institution which protected its members from outside interference. It was an institution made up of peasants who were not differentiated economically and who knew their own needs and capacities. In such village communities the Old-Slavonic traditions of mutual aid and egalitarian

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brotherhood could still be maintained. Since the seventeenth century, however, expenditures for military campaigns and for growing ranks of salaried bureaucrats necessitated increasing state incomes which could be obtained without much delay. Since the state was industrially and commercially undeveloped, the only way to increase revenues was in finding new means to squeeze out of the peasantry a still larger part of its produce. Therefore the old system of direct tax collecting from the mir was found to function inefficiently on the estates of the nobility, and laws were passed which made the landowners responsible for the collection of state taxes from the peasantry. In this way ties between the manorial peasants and the central government were severed.[1]

As a result of such a change in the political structure, the manorial serfs became now entirely dependent upon the owners of the manorial estates. There was no more possibility for the peasants to appeal directly to the government. Between the government and the manorial peasants stood now the landlords to whom the peasants became exclusively responsible as a final authority in all matters, administrative as well as judiciary.[2] *Pomeshchik* was now looked upon as the "natural protector of people, their local judge, the guardian of their welfare, their tutor, the trustee of poor and orphans, observer of good order and law."[3] He was considered as the Czar's overseer and watchdog.[4] The patriarchal dominance-submission and protection-dependence relationships which existed between the Czar and his subjects were now extended to the landlord and his serfs. Both the Czar and the landlord were addressed as *batyushka* (father).

The position of the serf, however, was now so much more precarious because in new relationships the power of the landlord was absolute. A life-long banishment to Siberia awaited him who lodged a complaint against his master. And since there were neither written laws nor any established customary law to regulate the relations between the serfs and the manorial lords, the serfs were completely dependent upon the degree of moral or ethical standards of their masters for their lives and well-being. These were often very low. Hence unprotected either by

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written or by customary rules of conduct and often exposed to the arbitrariness and mistreatment of their lords, the serfs on many manorial estates came to be completely dependent upon the will and capriciousness of their masters.

It is obvious that many landed gentry who were given such absolute rights over their serfs would tend to completely subjugate the mir also. In such circumstances the mir was likely to lose its character of a self-ruled and self-contained community and instead tended to become an instrument of landlord's power which made the landowner the absolute monarch of his estate. Under the overlordship of the estate owner the mir kept its watchful eye over every peasant, and made it easier for the landowner to manage his property, and for the government to rule the country. It was under such external pressures that the steppe traditions of an absolute, stern and distant patriarchal power were being strengthened among the peasantry.

II

The conditions of the peasants did not improve in these respects after the abolishment of serfdom in the second part of the nineteenth century.[5] The peasants were emancipated from the rule of the pomeshchiks and subjected again directly to the government. But now the government, pushed by pressing demands for increasing revenues, made the mir an instrument of state control and found in it one of the most exacting of tax collectors. In order to be assured of payment the state had to concede to the mir all of the most severe measures of authority. Now the mir was entitled to banish unsolvent peasants to Siberia. And when corporal punishment was abolished in urban criminal law practice, it was still left in use in the mir.[6]

After the abolishment of serfdom the mir came under the supervision of the district chief of police (*Ispravnik*). The law of 1874 gave the police the right to arrest and to fine the village elders, and even to demand from the governor of the province their discharge. The position of the elder became so undesirable that the mir sometimes had to exert force to obtain candidates for this office or to prevent those in office from resigning.[7]

There was another official in this system of rural administra-

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could be achieved only if Russia was to change radically its economic structure. As a result of such a trend of events and of thought the government passed a decree in 1861 according to which the peasants were set legally free from their masters.

As a consequence of his legal emancipation, the peasant found himself in the possession of less arable land than before, and he was still bound to it. He was overburdened even more than before because he was obliged to pay high redemption dues in addition to the heavy taxes that were imposed on him. Moreover the peasants in land communes not only remained jointly responsible to the government for the payment of taxes, but they were also made jointly responsible for redemption payments. The commune's authority over the peasants was increased and the peasant found himself under an even more exacting and more despotic commune regimentation than the one that existed before the "Emancipation Act."

At the same time the peasant still did not have sufficient arable land. He also lacked pasture grounds and timber which were of special importance in his technologically backward and extensive agricultural economy; most of such land was left in the hands of his former masters. The acuteness of land shortage was especially felt because of lack of artificial fertilizers, need for draught animals, and primitiveness of farm equipment. Many peasants did not even possess a wooden plow.

But though the emancipation act of 1861 still kept the peasants bound to the land, and did not provide them with sufficient land, it did open up opportunities for their economic advance and political activation. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the peasantry became generally recognized as a potentially very significant force, both politically and economically. It was this prospect of the peasant masses as the leading political power of the future in combination with the Slavophil idealization of the peasantry that gave rise to the ideology of *narodnichestvo* (populism). This ideology idealized the virtues and the creative potentialities of the peasantry, and just as the Slavophils, the narodniki claimed that the reconstruction of Russian society, even of the whole world, will come from Russian peasantry.

By the end of that century a faction of Russian radical intel-